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From this place to Callville, Mr. Parry estimates the distance at three hundred miles. The time occupied in the journey was fourteen days, "during seven of which Mr. White was without food of any description." The geographical discoveries consist in the approximate estimates of the length of the river, made upon the supposed rate of the flow of the current. These, as have been given, make the inaccessible parts of the Colorado proper, about five hundred miles long, following the winding of the bed, which is "very crooked." The location of the mouths of the San Juan, Colorado Chiquito, and his general description of the character of the sides of the Cañon are also valuable. These are described as "flaring" outwards, and composed throughout the greater part of their extent of light-colored rocks, probably the "Cretaceous and lower stratified rocks" of Newberry. The "average elevation" is placed at 3,000 feet, which is below that supposed by Ives and Newberry to be the average depth of the chasm. If this is so, the bed of the stream must rise rapidly above the point at which it was approached by the Ives expedition, for at that place they made it out with the aid of their instruments to be 5,000 feet. It is not generally known that Dr. Newberry has been upon a second expedition to this remarkable region, and that the results, though written out before the war, still lay unpublished at Washington. When the report of this expedition is published we may hope for more accurate information.

CHEMICAL NEWS.—The American publishers of the Chemical News propose to add to the English edition a Supplement, containing Notices of the current Progress of Chemistry and the Physical Sciences in America, Notices of New Books, Review of the Markets, Movements in Trade, etc. The new feature was inaugurated in the December issue, and is under the editorial charge of Professor Charles A. Seeley.

INSECT EXTINGUISHER.—Mingled with considerable irrelevant matter, this little pamphlet contains some useful hints on the means of exterminating insects, which will be well worth its price (12 cts.) to agriculturists. Address J. Treat, Vineland, N. J.

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## NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

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### BOTANY.

WHITE VARIETIES OF FLOWERS.—In the NATURALIST for June Mr. Broadhead mentions having seen *Lobelia syphilitica* and *Vernonia noveboracensis* with white flowers. Of the same species of *Lobelia* I saw several white flowered specimens last September, near Rock Lake, in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. I have also observed the white flowered variety of *Vernonia noveboracensis* in Pratt County, Illinois, during the past season. I can add to the list of floral albinos, already brought to notice in

the NATURALIST, the following, which I believe have not been mentioned by any writer, viz.: *Viola cucullata*, *Viola sagittata*, *Phlox pilosa*, and *Gerardia aspera*. All these have fallen under my observation in Southern Wisconsin during the past eight years. I observe also that in all of these plants the foliage is paler in the white flowered specimens. For example: *Gerardia aspera* has, in Wisconsin, almost always a purple stem and purplish foliage, but in the albino specimens, of which I have seen at least half a dozen, the stem and leaves were a very light green.

In the November number Mr. Meehan mentions a *Saxifraga* as growing wild with double flowers, and enquires, "Has any other double flower been found?" I reply that some six years since a rue anemone (*Anemone Thalictroides*) grew in a wood pasture near Albion, Wisconsin, with flowers perfectly double. After being transplanted to my mother's flower garden, it never flowered again, and finally disappeared. I also took a specimen of *Helianthus giganteus*, in October of the last year, from its native prairie soil, in Pratt County, Illinois, with all the flowers ligulate in the manner of the so-called double flowers of the florists of this natural order. — EDWARD L. GREENE, *Decatur, Ill.*

**MORE WHITE VARIETIES.**—The past season appears to have been unusually prolific in white flowers. In north-eastern Minnesota (shore of Lake Superior) I discovered a marked white variety of *Lobelia Kalmii* L. The plant was devoid of the purple tinge which generally pervades it more or less, and the corolla was pure white with a few pale yellow markings. It grew in abundance on damp rocks, in close proximity to the common form. I had observed previously the *Erigeron Philadelphicum* L., with white rays, which are usually of purple or flesh color. A friend informs me he has found this year, with white flowers, *Spiraea tomentosa* L., *Cirsium arvense* Scop., *Trifolium pratense* L., *Statice limonium* L., and *Gentiana saponaria* var. *linearis* Gr. We have had reported also *Cypripedium arietinum* R. Brown, and *Lobelia syphilitica* L. It would be most interesting to know if there is any influence of the season to produce this apparent abundance of white varieties, whether those variations are permanent, etc. I wish to call the attention of your readers to the subject, so that if any corroborative facts have fallen under their observation, they may kindly inform us. This may furnish conclusive testimony that certain seasons are remarkable in this way, and that that of 1868 was one of them.

From the *Lobelia cardinalis* L., and *L. syphilitica* L., having been not unfrequently found with white flowers, and a white variety of the *L. Kalmii* L. being now added to the group, it would appear that the genus is inclined to produce white varieties. Some plants have undoubtedly a peculiar inclination to this. I would add that, several years ago, I saw a single instance of *Campanula rotundifolia* L. with a white bell. The tendency of species all through creation to produce varieties is a subject of such deep interest, that anything which casts light on it is of special value. — HENRY GILLMAN, *Detroit, Michigan.*

**BIDENS FRONDOSA.**—The common Beggar-ticks are classified by the standard botanical authors as *rayless*, but Asa Gray (Manual, 2d. Ed., page 222) says, Dr. Sartwell has found it in western New York with one or two small rays. I have observed rays on this plant for several years. For the last two summers I have observed it more closely, and never found one plant without rays. The full number of rays are not always seen, but frequently the full number of eight rays are present. The ray is small and very caducous. To be seen, the head must be watched every day as it is opening, for the beautiful little ray only remains a day or two after its appearance. This plant is very abundant here. I have observed rays on thousands of specimens, and now at the close of this season am entirely convinced that it does not exist in this region without rays. It grows very luxuriantly here, often seven or eight feet high; but whether one or eight feet high, it makes no difference. The rays can always be found by close watching.

From the continual presence of the ray in this region, I am inclined to believe that there is something different in its development here, compared with the *B. frondosa* L. at the East, for if the rays were present so frequently at the East, the several masters of this science there could not have failed to observe it. And therefore as the ray is not found at the East, would there be any impropriety in assigning this a specific, or at least a variety name? The leaves here are often seven-divided, and the lower leaflets have two little secondary leaflets at their bases. If any Eastern botanist wishes to cultivate it, and thus try the effect of climate on it, he can have seed by applying to me soon.—HENRY SHIMER, *Mt. Carroll, Ill.*

**BIDENS FRONDOSA.**—The earliest heads of flowers of *Bidens frondosa* are usually radiate, with from two to ten small rays. The later heads are usually not radiate. Is it so elsewhere? If any persons wish specimens of the *Scolopendrium officinarum*, etc., I can furnish them, as I have about one hundred and twenty-five specimens on hand I would like to exchange for other plants, especially southern ones. This fern grows in great abundance around Green Lake and vicinity, in this county.—SAMUEL N. COWLES, *Otisco, Onondago County, N. Y.*

**ABNORMAL FORM OF THE SENSITIVE FERN.**—I found growing near here this summer a curious abnormal form of *Onoclea sensibilis*, in which all the pinnæ on one side of the stipe, except one, are much contracted, rolled up, and filled with *sporangia*, as in the natural form of this fern, while those on the opposite side of the stipe are twice pinnate, very slightly revolute, and some of them slightly contracted, but without losing their foliaceous character and bearing fruit; dots covered with the indusium, as in the var. *obtusilobata*. The curious state of this plant would seem to be intermediate between the true form of *Onoclea sensibilis*, and the var. *obtusilobata*. It certainly is analogous to the latter, though presenting a curious union of both. Professor Gray, in the "Manual" states that some such form of *Struthiopteris* has been found, but whether such a state in this fern is often found, I am uncertain.

Plants agreeing well with the var. *obtusilobata* were found growing near this one, and from the same rootstock of the common species.—CLAUDE CRITTENDEN, *Rochester, N. Y.*

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## ZOOLOGY.

THE BUTCHER BIRD AND MOTTLED OWL.—In Volume II, No. 7, page 380, the question is asked by Dr. Wood, if the *Collyrio borealis* has been known to return to animals which it has killed and empaled, or hung upon trees. Only one instance has come under my notice, and that was some years since, in the latter part of November. A Butcher bird returned to a pear tree upon which grasshoppers had been empaled and devoured them, though they had remained there some weeks and had become dry. I should like to ask any person who is acquainted with the habits of the Shrike if they kill and empale animals at all seasons of the year, or only two or three months preceding winter.

There is something singular with regard to the vision of the Mottled Owl, which the Doctor notices in an article on the Mottled Owl, in the same volume and number, on page 373. I was once in search of the nest of this owl, and in passing under an apple tree, I saw what seemed to be a part of a bird protruding from a limb of the tree, and in climbing up to the spot, I found a male Mottled Owl, with his head and shoulders thrust into a small cavity in the limb. I took him out and perched him upon my finger, where he stood for some minutes. I put my hand upon his back and smoothed down his feathers, when he would turn his head and look me full in the face and snap his bill. I stretched out his wings and handled him other ways. At last he flew in a direct line for an apple tree, standing about eight rods distant, and entered a hole in a rotten branch of the tree as readily as if it had been in the night-time. This occurred when the sun was shining brightly, at about noon.—AUGUSTUS FOWLER, *Danvers, Mass.*

SHEDDING OF THE HORNS OF THE AMERICAN ANTELOPE (*Antilocapra Americana*\*).—My experience in regard to the shedding of antelope's horns is this: I have killed bucks and does in October and November, and the first of December, and after the heads have become dry, the horns slip from the pith, which appeared to extend to a little above the prong; but the prong was only noticed as extending upwards, and not beyond a line extending downwards towards the but of the horn; and in spring I have found on bucks and does a soft hairy horn within an inch or two of the point which would become hard. Does' horns are about one-half or a third of the length of those of the bucks.

I owned a buck which I got when about four months old, and in March he had horns about one and a half inches long, a little before he was a year old, and shed about three quarters of an inch, and as I kept him well, and castrated him in August (to keep him from leaving), he shed about

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\* Communicated in a letter received by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.